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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR (DICARLO), EUR/SCE
(HOH/FOOKS/STINCHCOMB), PRM/ECA (JOHNSON)

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [BK](#)
SUBJECT: BOSNIA - 2008 PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR PRM
AMBASSADOR'S FUND FOR REFUGEES

REF: SECSTATE 6779

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request, see paragraphs 3 and 4.

[1](#)2. (U) In response to PRM's announced renewal of the Ambassador's Fund for Refugees for the eighth year (ref), we have identified a critical gap in returnee assistance and protection for FY 08. Last year, PRM provided funding for the purchase of milking machines and sanitary milk pails for distribution among a cooperative of Serb returnees in Drvar Municipality in the Federation. The USG donation encouraged additional financing of the project by the Federation Ministry of Refugees and Displaced Persons and the International Orthodox Christian Charities. After consultations with local organizations assisting minority returns and through personal field visits, we have identified the following project for FY 08 funding through the Ambassador's Fund for Refugees.

[1](#)3. (U) Post requests \$20,000 in funding to repair the roofs of at least 20 Bosnian Croat returnee family homes in the Serb-majority municipality of Banja Luka in the Republika Srpska (RS). Of more than 150,000 Croats who lived in the RS before the war, there are now less than 14,000. In Banja Luka, only about 2,500 Bosnian Croats remain from the pre-war population of more than 29,000. A considerable number of Bosnian Croat returnees have not received assistance in repairing and reconstructing their pre-war homes and have not returned. Many who have received assistance and returned still do not have solid shelter or the adequate economic means to make necessary repairs. Minority returnees in the RS (including Bosnian Croats) often face discrimination and do not have equal access to public employment, social benefits and municipal services -- including public assistance for housing repairs. One of the most common problems in returnee communities today is leaking roofs caused by shoddy or substandard reconstruction. This situation precludes additional return and threatens the sustainability of the returns that have occurred to date.

[1](#)4. (U) Roof repairs will enable more than 100 Bosnian Croat returnees to remain in their current homes. Working with the Banja Luka-based Agency for Cooperation, Education and Development (ACED) and Caritas Banja Luka, PRM funding will fill this critical gap in returnee assistance. The project, led by ACED, will encourage sustainable return, free-up returnees' household resources for other expenses, and strengthen the capacity of Caritas Banja Luka to assist members within the Bosnian Croat returnee community. With PRM funding for materials and operational costs, ACED will provide the technical assistance and contracting services to assist in the roof repair. Caritas volunteers from several nations in Europe will travel to Bosnia to provide the physical labor. The RS Ministry of Refugees and Displaced Persons has promised to match any donation made by PRM,

thereby exponentially increasing the number of beneficiaries reached through this project.

¶5. (U) If approved, Post will implement and manage project funds and will ensure appropriate dissemination of funds, monitoring and follow-up by the end of the fiscal year. Post will arrange for media coverage of the Ambassador's visit to several of the repaired homes to promote the implementation of the fund and will use the occasion to highlight our support of minority returns in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
ENGLISH